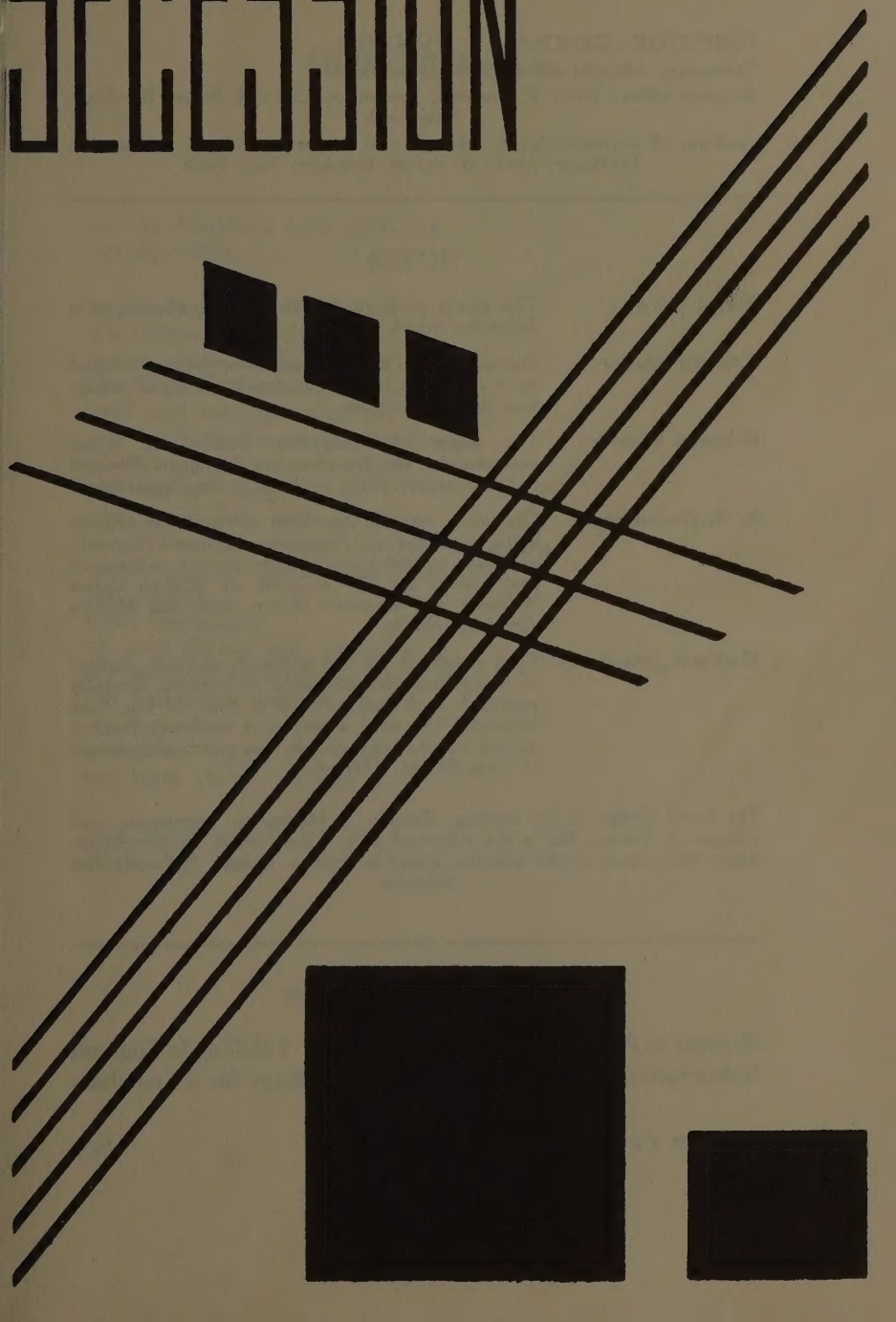
SECESSION



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NOTES

Slater Brown: The mayor of Imst, Austrian Tyrol, elected on a *Secession* ticket.

Kenneth Burke: The mayor of Weehawken, New Jersey, elected on a *Secession* issue — an investigation of American literary criticism.

Malcolm Cowley: The mayor of Montpellier, France, an honor accorded for the first time to a foreigner. Pledged to the *Secession* plank — Back to the Elizabethans!

E. E. Cummings: Candidate for the mayoralty of Paris, the present literary capital of America. Indorses *Secession* campaign against Louis Untermeyer, an anthologist best known for the omission of William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore from his *Modern American Poetry.*

Matthew Josephson: Rival candidate for the mayoralty of Paris. Author of many *Secession* campaign documents. Recently wounded in a duel with Will Bray at the Parc Monceau. The duel arose, it is rumored, from a quarrel concerning a certain lady editor and poetess of Cass Street, Chicago.

The cover design is by Ludwig Kassák, a Hungarian communist and refugee in Vienna. He is the editor of *MA*, a publication in correspondence with those of the advance guard in France, Russia, Germany and America.

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NUMBER TWO JULY 1922

FOUR POEMS

I.

on the Madam's best april the
twenty nellie

anyway and
it's flutters everything
queer; does smells he smiles is
like Out of doors he's a with
eyes and making twice the a week
you kind of, know (kind well of
A sort of the way he smile but
and her a I mean me a
Irish, cook but well oh don't
you makes burst want to dear somehow
quickyes when (now, dark dear oh)
the iceman
how, luminously
oh how listens and, expands
my somewherealloverme heart my
the halfgloom coolish
of The what are
parks for wiggle yes has
are leap, which, anyway

give rapid lapfulls of
idiotic big hands

II.

(and i imagine
never mind Joe agreably cheerfully remarked when
surrounded by fat stupid animals
the jewess shreiked
the messiah tumbled successfully into the world
the animals continued eating. And i imagine she, and
heard them slobber and
in the darkness)

stood sharp angels with faces like Jim Europe

III.

life hurl my
yes, crumbles hand (ful released conarefetti) ev eryflitter,
inga. where
mil(lions of aflickf)litter ing brightmillion ofS hurl;
edindodg: ing
whom areEyes shy-dodge is bright cruMbshandful, quick-
hurl edinwho
Is flittercrumbs, fluttercrimbs are floatfallin, g; allwhere:
a: crimbflitteringish is arefloatsis ingfallall! mil, shy
milbrightlions
my (hurl flicker handful
in) dodging are shybrigHteyes is crum bs (alll) if, ey Es

IV.

workingman with hand so hairy-sturdy
you may turn O turn that airy hurdysturdygurdy
but when will turn backward O backward Time in your
no thy flight
and make me a child, a pretty dribbling child, a little child.

In thy your ear:
en amerique on ne boit que de Jingyale.
things are going rather kaka
over there, over there.
yet we scarcely fare much better — —

what's become of (if you please)
all the glory that or which was Greece
all the grandja
that was dada?

make me a child, stout hurdysturdygurdyman
waiter, make me a child. So this is Paris.
i will sit in the corner and drink thinks and think drinks,
in memory of the Grand and Old days:
of Amy Sandburg
of Algernon Carl Swinburned.

Waiter a drink waiter two or three drinks
what's become of Maeterlink
now that April's here?
(ask the man who owns one
ask Dad, He knows).

E. E. CUMMINGS

It is strange that a little mud
Should echo with sounds, syllables, and letters;
Should rise up and call a mountain Popocatepetl,
And a green-leafed wood Oleander.

W. J. TURNER

Play it for me again; the theme repeated
slips insensibly from major into minor;
each chord, each tone drumming separately
against taut nerves.

I have heard melodies
that stilled the hammer of the heart against
the boxed ribs, that played like caressing hands
along the spine, but theirs is a facile beauty
which you despise, whose long prehensile fingers
grope for expression painfully along the keys.

And there are melodies which assault the body,
entering in at the mouth and the nose and the little
pores beneath the armpits, and having taken
possession of me utterly, burst through
the parchment armor of skin.

O beauty
too great for this my body, infected
with the venerealities of sense!
O all-sufficient loveliness:
I cling
vainly to the marble of your flanks
vainly against the thighs of beauty, knowing
before the ecstasy that my clenched fingers
will loose their perilous grip, that I shall fall
awkwardly to adjust myself about
my skeleton.

But play the theme once more
once more . . . in the pool of sense, the ripples widen
uselessly lap the shores and die away.

MALCOLM COWLEY

POEM

One morning during Carnaval they found two swans in the
Public Garden, their long necks twisted, two swans lying
splendidly dead under a magnolia

not yet in blossom and nobody ever knew why they were
killed, whether it was a drunkard, whether an old man
tired of women's bodies and wishing thus to destroy

a more impeccable beauty, or was he young (over
them bends
a domino, black with white moons for buttons, while the
sky like a domino bends more vastly over).

It was a crime of passion; if I have read

of other passionate crimes in curtained alcoves, knife
or poison, they were less splendid than these two dead
swans, O less magnificent than the formal pool, empty with-
out them, this empty pool which stares

fixedly into a fixed and empty sky.

MALCOLM COWLEY

THE BOOK OF YUL

Part One

While waiting, two men carried on a conversation that flapped and fluttered like an old newspaper. And a third was silent. Finally, the conversation gained in intensity, culminating in some disagreeable figure or image. Whereat, the third man rose and left the room. With us following, for it is he who conceived of Yul and the eleventh city. Thus:

Three men in a room, towards night. Two of them sat in the cold, sprawled somewhat, and with their overcoats on. The third was huddled in a Morris-chair, knees up to his chin, looking down over his toes at the vague carpet. „Do you think she will come?" one of the other two asked. He swallowed, and noticed that his throat was getting sore. For a while they shifted slightly, in silence. (As the room grew darker, no one had moved to light the lamps.) The sounds outside came in dampened by the snow.

„We should have started a fire when we first got here", the first man said, yawning. „If we're going to wait around here we might as well be comfortable."

„Too late now, she'll be along any minute."

The man hunched up in the Morris-chair sniffled three or four times, and then blew his nose. „Ah, what a bitter world!" one of the others laughed. „Look, the poor devil had to move." . . . A heavy clock, in another room somewhere, or upstairs, or in the hall, sunk seven strokes into the room. Outside an automobile stalled. They heard the scraping of the self-starter several times before the motor began working again. Then the car jerked ahead; then stalled. After a few minutes, however, the motor thumped with a solid regularity, and the car passed on down the street. Out of the high windows the snow could be seen falling diagonally across a street lamp.

„This waiting outside the gates of Heaven is cold business."

„Why in the name of God do you call it the gates of Heaven?"

Somebody could be heard walking. Thump, thump, THUMP louder . . . then THUMP, THUMP, thump fainter. „Probably the people in the next house." Listening intently, they could even catch a grumble of voices. Off up there, on the other side of the wall somewhere, people were no doubt sitting around talking, before a big fire, in a room full of light, eating, or maybe drinking something strong. Like those conceptions of perfect luxury which are inserted in the upper right-hand corner, the rest of the picture being devoted to a boy in rags, starving to death in a snowy alley.

A wind caught in the chimney in such a way as to disturb the burnt rubbish in the grate. The smell of rotten apples blew out into the room. Two girls passed outside, laughing, and hurrying with short, sharp steps. The man who had swallowed a little while ago brought up some saliva and swallowed again, to test his throat; the glands were distinctly swollen. He shot his cigarette into the dead grate; after a few moments, however, he lighted another. He said, „Damn this place for a tomb." A pause; then he continued, „When I stay very long in a place like this I always think, what if I were trapped in? . . . when I was a boy, I saw a crow early one spring standing bolt upright in a tree. I went closer, and he didn't fly. Then I saw that his foot had been caught in a fox trap. He flew to this tree, where the chain got caught in one of the branches. So he had been there during the winter, exposed to the cold and without food; and when he died the trap weighted him so that he stood up as chestily as the healthiest crow you ever saw. . . . When I wait in a place like this, I can't help thinking of dying that way. Can't you imagine us all sitting here in this darkness, dead, you holding a pipe, and me like this, and him over there in the corner all hunched up!" At this point, the man in the Morris-chair got up, left the room, and could be heard immediately afterwards going down the stone stairs on to the street.

The snow was falling now in thick wet gobs. Before he had gone fifty feet it was clinging to the fuzz on his woolen coat. Big banks of cleanliness had been

stacked up. The lights of the store windows lay distinctly across the pavements. In that arc-light, in the carbon, in one molecule of the carbon, maybe, there was a little world, with planets and stars, and an infinite sky, and things living on some of the planets, and things living on those things. Someday some big hand would want our universe for an arc-light, and crunch, away it would go. „In one little corner beyond the stars, a world glowing up there all by itself, not crowded in the way ours is . . .“ God, what a night! He listened unconsciously to the different scrapings of the shovels.

He started to turn into the subway, but did not do so, since an elation was on him. Instead, he went into the park, and stamped about in the heavy snow, even walked across one of the ponds, in fact. A gust of wind hit him strong enough for him to rise up against it, and yell into the teeth of it. Then he swung his arms, and charged an embankment. When he reached the top, he looked about him, a half mile across the park to the lights of the apartments along the edge. The wind dropped away; he was almost hot after his exertion. He opened his coat and laughed a stage laugh. Then he chanted, „Sic erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in caecula saeculorum, amen. And the wind, appearing before me, spook, speek, spike, spuck, SPAKE, ‚Behold the eleventh citee‘. And I, answering unto the wind, spook, speek, spike, spuck, SPAY-ACHE, ‚Verily, verily, do I behold the eleventh citee, for there are ten others buried beneath it. Gloria!“

And then continuing to sing-song the Sic erat, his mind wandered off to elaborate the eleventh city. „It is in the bottom of the sea“, he thought, „and lived in by extremely cultivated fishes“. But I happen to know that it is not at the bottom of the sea; or that it is not even near the sea. But it stands, bulky and dead, in the middle of a plain, silhouetted against the sky, and cold.

It is granite. Even the beds on which the people sleep are granite slabs, built in square holes carved out of the walls. For people live in this eleventh city: quiet, grey-eyed people, who slip about the stone streets, and in and out of the oblong holes which serve as

doors. But the under cities are filled with corpses, lying in rows, perfectly preserved, and without smell. The streets are long straight lines, and other long straight lines drawn perpendicular to these; the same is consistently true of the architecture.

And there was a traveler in this city, by the name of Yul. Looking ahead at the end of the widest street, he saw a break in the two walls of granite, and went towards it. It was a stairway, he found. Broad stairs, the width of a palace in his own country, led down to a platform, then down to a platform, and so on down and down to platforms. All this was lit with a uniform incandescence. While at the base of the stairs there stood two granite lamp posts, of no great size, but which he could distinguish as clearly as though they were immediately in front of him.

But Yul did not descend these stairs.

Part Two

Yul found the system of transit which had been evolved here of great ingenuity. It was composed of sixteen parallel tracks, or rather, endless platforms, which moved continually. These platforms were provided with benches, pavements, places to eat, and the like. Now, as Yul stepped toward the south, he noticed that each platform moved slightly faster than the one to the north of it; and although the change from platform to platform was hardly more abrupt than the difference between the pace of of a baby just learning to walk and the ordinary walking-speed of a grown-up, by the time Yul had reached the fifteenth platform to the south he was speeding enormously. The sixteenth platform, however, was entirely different from the fifteen preceding. To begin with, he found that it could not be boarded at any point, as with the other platforms. In front of him there moved a stone wall; occasionally, behind this wall he heard a roar, as of something which approached and retreated. And Yul, noticing that a group of grey-gowned figures had stopped near him

on the fifteenth platform and seemed to be waiting, waited as well.

Within a short time he saw a tower approaching on the sixteenth platform. It advanced evenly, floated towards them, growing gradually above them as it came. When it was only a short ways off, he also noticed that there was a break in the stone wall at this point, and that some of the figures farther down the platform were already entering there. In due time it reached him, and he stepped under the square stone arch on to the sixteenth platform. Everything was quite different here. Instead of the stone benches, pavements, kiosks, there was nothing but this lonely tower and a straight steel track that blurred away to the east and west. Like the others, he entered the tower, and found it a sort of rest room or waiting room.

Finally, above the grinding of the platforms, a far-off whirr was heard. The grey-clad figures left the tower, Yul thinking it best to follow. A line of cars shot up to the tower and stopped. Yul followed his companions into one of the cars, and they sped along the sixteenth platform. Yul sank into a stupor from this accumulation of speeds, partaking of nothing but a bitter, burning liquid which was brought to him at intervals. After another two days, Yul tired of the cars, and descended at one of the towers. Then he crossed the fifteen other platforms to the north, and found, when he stepped off the last of them, that he had returned almost to the starting point*.

He came to the wide street again, and entered one of the oblong cuts in the stone which served as doorways. Inside, there were winding stairs, lit with the same unvarying incandescence that he had noticed on the stairs leading down to the buried cities. Yul wound slowly upwards, his steps slapping back at him in a confusion of echoes. The stairs curved into a room; a large, square room, empty except for a tablet on one

* He had circled only once about the city in all this time, and that in spite of the enormous velocity with which he had been traveling; which facts, it is hoped, will tend to show the vastness of the eleventh city, and of the ten cities buried beneath it.

of the walls and a bench placed before this tablet. Yul, who could not read the tablet, noticed the firmness of the characters, and passed on into the next room. This room, too, was large and square and empty. But there was a window hewn out in one wall, oblong like the doors in the street, except that it was lying on one of the longer sides. From this window Yul could see across the plain to the even, cold horizon. It was in still another room, the third, that Yul voided.

Yul then came down from this place into the street, and walked along until he came to a larger granite entrance than was usual. He entered, finding himself beneath a balcony. He walked farther and saw a floor of white marble, dipping in a slow curve toward a stage or altar in the distance. Yul fell upon his knees and wept, this quiet curve was so soothing to him. Looking above him, he saw that here, too, there were curves; the walls reaching up thin arms of broken arches; a ceiling behind shadows, and vaulted; and thick wooden beams that worked among one another like a mass of human bodies. The church was nearly dark, while the altar glowed with a soft phosphorescence.

As he wept, Yul felt something which was like a purring of the floor, while an uncertain but penetrative odor filtered about him. The marble was warm, so that he lay flat on his back and sent his eyes into the shadows of the beams.

The odor increased, until Yul felt a restlessness come over him. He arose, and began putting aside his clothes, until finally he stood naked in the middle of the vast, empty church. Then, listening with great intensity, he thought he could distinguish footsteps. They were far away, but hurrying. They would increase, then nearly fall away completely, so that Yul began to despair. But finally they became firmer; they were advancing; they were upon him . . , and down to one side of the altar he saw a form coming toward him.

While it was still far off, Yul could already distinguish two eyes, which were like moist planets shined on by the sun. That is, they seemed to lie on the face, with an aggressive clearness, while they did not burn but had rather that quiet, steel-blue light of a

planet. Of a moist planet, that is . . . not of some dry planets which are like a copper-red spark. Yul watched the eyes, as they came nearer to him, like magnets.

And as the form stood before him, Yul saw that it was the form of a woman; and at once he loved her clamorously. But she picked up the clothes which he had thrown off and held them out to him, so that Yul put them all back upon his body. When he had dressed, he stood in front of her, and looked into her eyes. They were big and deep, like lakes, for he could see down into the rich black pupils as though they really were made of water. She took him by the hand and led him toward the altar, until Yul threw back his head and sang. But his notes began lingering and grumbling to one another among the beams, so that he quit singing. . . . He was led to the edge of the altar. Then she let go his hand, and jumped. Looking where she had jumped, Yul saw that she had leapt across a pit in the centre of the altar. He looked down into this pit; it was dark, but so far below that it made him shudder he could see the incandescence of the lowest of the buried cities. Then he jumped and followed his companion on the other side of the altar.

For a time they labored along together, down steps into cold damp places; around sudden bends into rooms which were warm and brilliant; through some narrow passage with a rough, pebbly bottom; then across a little stone bridge under which a spring flowed out of the rock and back into it. But of a sudden she stopped and opened her arms to him. Yul closed against her, looking into the roads and caverns of her eyes. She stepped away, tore back her garments with one fling of her hand . . . and Yul crumpled on the ground under the impact of his disgust. For shining out upon the hairs of the *mons Veneris*, there was a third eye, which beheld him steadily and without blinking.

. . . When Yul awoke, the woman had gone. He began working his way slowly back through the labyrinth of rooms and passages. At last he came upon the pit, and jumped across it. He saw as he went out of the church that immediately in front of it was the broad stairway which led down into the other cities.

He looked along the narrowing avenue of stairs, and at the end of them he could make out something which moved. But a peculiar sickness was on him; he longed for his own country, and dropping where he stood, he fell asleep on the first of the granite stairs.

Part Three

Later Yul returned to the stone church . . . and the assembled multitude, lifting its thin voices, chanted in unison the Litany of Error:

We shall go into the tenth city
Glory glory unto our woes
And take the hands of our fathers
Glory glory unto our woes
And kiss the nail holes in their palms
Glory glory unto our woes
And in the palms of our mothers
Glory glory unto our woes
And touch the old shells of their skin
Glory glory unto our woes

And rejoice that now they are alive oh unfolding of the revelation oh ecstasy of blossoming into a world of eternity oh astonishment of opening their petals in the warm garden of our Maker glory glory unto the woes of our fathers and our fathers before them and whatever may befall us in our own day

The multitude, and the priest . . . they had alternated, the priest alone, standing in the glow of the altar, carrying the „Glory glory unto our woes." But when the lob-end of the prayer was reached, the priest and the kneeling multitude rose up, while heavy music was suddenly sprayed into the church. After the singing was ended, the music wound on for a few bars in reminiscence . . . then it suddenly regained its vigor, and while the multitude knelt again with bowed heads it repeated the entire form of the litany, growing at the last into a tangle of chromatics, with agitated notes

crawling in among one another, and accumulating fugues, while the whole jumbled mass grew more voluminous and climbed slowly up the scale. Out of it all there burst one neat, soft chord, high in the treble. This chord hung, while the rest of the music dropped away, until finally it existed all by itself. Then it, too, gradually weakened. But for a long time after it was gone entirely the multitude remained kneeling.

Now the ceremony seemed to drop more into the business of worship. At times the multitude would rise, kneel at times, while there were even times when it became prostrate on the white marble floor. Up from out of the altar, a long sermon was delivered by one of the priests. It was a well wrought sermon, by which is meant that it showed the effects of a mind which had devoted several nights to working out the arabesques of its idea. „That which is created creates in turn that by which it was created". The voice from the glowing altar suffered its little elations, its momentary discoveries, its occasional felicities between the idea and the expression thereof . . . the words spread out over the quiet multitude, certain sounds lodging among the beams of the ceiling, others shooting straight to the ear, others floating up sluggishly . . . so that it all became slightly confused and mellowed . . . in spite of the hard little stones of the priest's inexorable logic . . . and the voice rose and fell, went slower in places for the purpose of emphasis, hurried across parenthetical explanations, paused before launching on new developments of the idea, halted and retracted a statement to a degree, dropped into a steady trot of exposition . . . the multitude, far from being disturbed that the words of it all did not reach them with clarity, rested comfortably on the dips and fluxes of the priest's voice.

The sermon was followed by a prayer . . . in trailing sentences of unequal length . . . some short . . . some stretching out to the length of two breaths . . . and at the end the multitude joined with the priest in praying . . . the frail single line of words from the altar, then the confused growl of the multitude. After the prayer, the church lay lifeless for a few moments.

Then a flash of light shot across it. The priest climbed in leaps upon the altar, until he stood looking down upon the multitude. A chord was struck, and the priest, taking his pitch immediately as the chord vanished, chanted:

LET THE NINE CHOSEN BE BROUGHT INTO THE HOLY ARENA

And off somewhere, lost in the caverns of the church which led away to the right behind the altar, the chant was repeated in a little thread of voice:

Let the Nine Chosen be brought into the holy arena.

Then even fainter, away tho the left behind the altar:

Holy . . . Holy . . . Holy . . .

LET THE NINE CHOSEN BE BOUND UPON THE BEAMS OF THEIR CROSSES

Let the Nine Chosen be bound upon the beams of their crosses.

Crosses . . . crosses . . . crosses of holiness . . .

LET THE NAILS BE DRIVEN INTO THE HANDS AND THE FEET OF THEM AND THEIR SIDES TRANSFIXED WITH SPEAR HEADS UNTIL BLOOD MIXES WITH THE SWEAT OF THE EXECUTIONERS AND REJOICE THAT NOW THE ARE ALIVE OH UNFOLDING OF THE REVELATION OH ECSTASY OF BLOSSOMING INTO A WORLD OF ETERNITY OH ASTONISHMENT OF OPENING THEIR PETALS IN THE WARM GARDEN OF OUR MAKER GLORY GLORY UNTO THE WOES OF OUR FATHERS AND OUR FATHERS BEFORE THEM . . . AND LO! BEHOLD THEM ENTER:

The voice stopped; the priest's arms were stretched out in imitation of the agony of the cross; music broke out, while at the same time a shrieking rose to the right of the altar; silk streamers began dropping and wisting, played upon by lights of all colors. The

college of priests hurried up before the altar, howling „Glory, glory!“ leaning forward and bearing the crosses of the Nine Crucified like banners. They stopped short before the pit; the music dropped away; the streamers subsided into a lazy billow; the lights became one penetrating reddish purple, which lay in all corners of the church like a sunset. The bodies of the Nine Crucified could be seen moving in silence on their crosses. . . . The priest, from the summit of the altar, gave a signal with his hand, and the crosses with their burdens were dropped into the pit. For a time they could be heard, scraping now and then against the sides, or colliding with one another. Finally, as they reached the bottom of the lowest city, faint thumps came up out of the pit.

The multitude huddled together, closer about the altar. It seemed to be listening. The thumps became heavier; they recurred at set intervals, like a slow treading of feet. Outside the church, beheld by no one in all this city. the march of the armless giants . . . advancing down the broad stairway which was the width of a palace in Yul's own country . . . little ripples passing along their ranks and being lost in the distance . . . armless giants, which rise up boldly out of their legs, like towers.

KENNETH BURKE

MR. AA THE ANTIPHILOSOPHER

The room was full of furniture drawn from very different periods. One afternoon as i went out, i was astonished at being made to wait at the door 2 or 3 minutes. Mr. Aa was sitting on a chest. She begged me, laughing, not to be disturbed. The chest was full of objects of great value. She said that she had not heard me knock. The coroner entered. Zounds! i cried, you are weeping, you are moved to the point of tears and you do not breathe a word to me of your troubles. The persons who attended the coroner guarded the doors. The thought of this also aroused me. The coroner was a young man. It was clear to me that some generous and ardent sentiment functioned upon his face like a smouldering fire, though whether it were of love or compassion i could not say. The coroner tapped the objects in the chest and tested their stability. I sat down at the table with a right gallant air, but by the light of the candle betwixt him and me i perceived a certain sadness in the countenance and in the eyes of my dear friend the coroner. He bent and looked down very often but said nothing. He marked out the place with silent powder and thus circumvented the danger. The coroner gave orders. These orders seemed as lugubrious to me as the perverse brilliance of this festive gaiety. He related to me that after having learned that i had deceived him, and that i had gone off with Mr. Aa, he had mounted a horse to pursue me, that he had arrived at St. Denis a half hour after my departure, that being certain that i would stop at Paris he had spent 6 weeks in a vain search for me, and that one day he had recognized Mr. Aa at the Comedy, and that he was so bravely dressed that he concluded the man owed this fortune to a new haul in scrap iron the returns of which had filled his money-bags with palliative warmth. He pulled the cord. Every other day. There i conceived a peaceful and portable manner of life. It is told that the judge was very severe. Unhappy knight, thou shalt lose all that thou hast loved in this world. Forgive me that i tell in so few words a tale which rends me. A cat forgotten by the express

company leaps out of a porcelain vase and justice is solemnly rendered. Forgive me again that i encompass in so few words a tale which pierces my heart. But the pancreatic reservoir of the kidneys and the bowels makes feasible the crossing of the desert in a sail-boat, which contains bottles of condensed farewells conservatories distilleries of gastric disgust and open pockets strewn all along way down the Mississippi.

TRISTAN TZARA

PLOTS FOR PENPUSHERS

A.
1. The man is motivated by his ideals, the woman by his ideals.
2. The man is motivated by his passions, the woman by his passions.
3. The man is motivated by his ideals, the woman by his passions.
4. The man is motivated by his passions, the woman by his ideals.

B.
1. The man is motivated by her ideals, the woman by her ideals.
2. The man is motivated by her passions, the woman by her passions.
3. The man is motivated by her ideals, the woman by her passions.
4. The man is motivated by her passions, the woman by her ideals.

C.
1. The man is motivated by his ideals, the woman by her ideals.
2. The man is motivated by his passions, the woman by her passions.
3. The man is motivated by his ideals, the woman by her passions.
4. The man is motivated by his passions, the woman by her ideals.

D.
1. The man is motivated by her ideals, the woman by his ideals.
2. The man is motivated by her passions, the woman by his passions.
3. The man is motivated by her ideals, the woman by his passions.
4. The man is motivated by her passions, the woman by his ideals.

Note: For novelists or story-tellers only a single item is neccessary. For playwrites, however, the late Geo. P. Baker of Harvard University advises a swift progression by acts from one item to another. Ex. — C3 to C2 to B2 with slow curtain. (In case slow curtain is deemed inadvisable, A1 may be substituted for B2.) D1 accompanied by soft music makes very affecting climax for any arrangement of items.

SLATER BROWN

THE OBLATE

„Les grands marais phosphorescents font de jolis rêves et les crocodiles se reprennent la valise faite avec leur peau."

André Breton et Ph. Soupault.

1.

„But no! Hear me, I beg of you — —"

Irrevocable. The man was gone in his spleen, and the door slammed behind him, while Hyacinth lingered in an arrested posture. What torture to have the door close upon one in the midst of a sentence. It were almost relief to finish the thought without an audition. Heavens! The man was like a panther: he darted calumny, abuse, derision at you, held the stump for an hour, and when you framed your defense, interrupted you and went off in a petty squall. Well, what of that? Hyacinth still owed him money. He would have to calm down and come back for it. But his methods, — were they not those of a boxer? To attack constantly both as a means of defence and of finishing the opponent.

Hyacinth's brain was an angular but smoothly functioning affair. Once under steam its glib constructions not only lulled his qualms as to his own failings but were capable of quieting those of others. It was obviously in full knowledge of this that his friend had adopted such a high-handed method of dealing with him.

How the man had ranted on! Hyacinth shuddered at the thought of what ill-mannered liberties he had borne for the past hour. He stood near his high window and looking out at the valley which lay below The Heights, reflected: women? there are millions of them down there. Strong-arm methods, a little ogling, a little of the satyr, and they are yours. It is nightfall, and everything blends into the crepuscular marmalade which so delights the feeble-minded. For me the white light of the sun still fries the Earth.

Walking with an older friend whose company was always far more soothing to him, a few moments later

in his discursive existence, walking this avenue which followed along the edge of a great escarpment where the earth had been cleft away hugely so that men had built a vast part of the city in the lowlands, he thought it music to promenade this avenue of reverent poplars in the evening regarding the heights, distances, lights, and playing with pure extension as he mused.

„You must not think me positivistic", Hyacinth was saying. „Far from that, I am as empirical as you claim to be. My only insistence is upon a system of good taste in the decoration of one's life. Not to be too strenuous, not to lose one's poise. I admit to you that I love Vadya, but not as you would have me. At any rate, she has failed to shake me into turbulence or unsobriety."

The night was of pure May. The two men paused and leaned over the parapet, which guarded the steep drop, and observed a good portion of the city's torso. Their droll feet hung somewhat above the street, and from the nature of their vantage point a mood of profound and severe objectivity held them . . . At the edge of the city a broad river flowed down to the sea and was lit with stars, electric-signs and the signals of vessels. A pink haze lay over the center where the light was cast back fiercest at the ajutting clouds. It was all a question of incandescent lights. Street lamps ran off in twisting trails, lost themselves in the conflagration of chewing-gum signs, emerged again saucily and wandered on elsewhere. Long trains containing arc-lamps ran along elevated beds, turned, paused, and swung off smoothly again making a song in the crisp distance. Here the stars were a mute minority, mere perforations in the non-committal ether; but the inferno of luminaries below challenged oracular statements. Stars! Poor cousins, poor satellites of our lighting system!

„I feel all the calmer, I feel more desire for clarity and reserve, when I view from here the miserable insect existence of these people in the dust and the vulgar light, the mobs treading each other's feet in their importunate haste for some ephemeral whim. It is only here, in this mood that one throws off the

mask of false idealism. It is as if I am looking into the un-curtained window of their existence."

„The situation gives me little, save a slight sensation of vertigo," said his friend, Robert-Martin. „And then, perhaps a conception of collective movement, collective barbarism . . ."

„There is the same coursing of the instincts without question, without cogitation or rhyme. There is none weighs the immediate impulse for a momentary consideration. None hazards the possible loss of the instant joys. The only comforting observation to be drawn from it is that 'tis all leading speedily to the merry destruction of the whole vicious organism."

„But conceive," said Robert-Martin, „conceive for a moment the numberless pairs coupled in every distortion of coitus at this very moment. The legions of expectant and satiate! . . ."

Hyacinth shuddered with disgust, replying, „That is always why I am conscious of a certain embarrassment when I pass a window which has the blind drawn. And yet here . . . the window is flung wide open."

„I can scent the perfume of the belle at her toilette . . . The beautiful Armenian lives there, a little toward the South, near the river. But for the sake of my children . . ."

Hyacinth became troubled by the weight of his renunciations. He it was who had written:

> „I have run thy length and breadth O city feeling by my finger tips and about my temples the reverberations of thine influences it is indeed the easeful and lavish mode of life that thou hast engendered that softens and wearies us so that we bend the knee and are slaves again I have looked down from one of thy great towers and seen the men moving tinily about like lice bartering and trafficking giving and lusting there was an itch upon them and the very air stank with their malice afar I saw the sunken rivers the seas and the reverent mists bordering the harbor waiting calmly let us not break bread any longer with them the lousy populace to the hills let us come away ere yet the sea engulfs them . . . etc etc"

The sprit which had written this litany now trembled for a nicer flagellation: that of prowling with the scavengers, rioting in their ghoulish debauches. A nostalgia for the great phosphorescent swamps possessed him.

„Vadya," murmured the great man who had children. His voice caressed the name.

„But I love Vadya," declared Hyacinth in stentorian tones. „Must it continue to be an affair of the cortex? You must take me to her."

„There is to be a ball tonight. She will be the most beautiful woman there. The young men will gather about her and their dark eyes will narrow into fine slits. Are you willing to come, Hyacinth?"

Hyacinth thought with revulsion of a night when he had nearly suffered complete immolation of himself. Bendel, his lost friend, had taken him to an Armenian cabaret on the East-side, where they had drunk blond wine and eaten potato-cakes while the proprietor played Brahms' Hungarian dances on the cymbaloon and two maidens accompanied them with harsh tambourines. The marble-topped tables had no cloths; the walls were covered all about with painful mirrors. A vender of nuts whom Bendel called the Baboon came and sat with them. „She wants you," he had said to Bendel pointing to the younger of the dancers, „but she is seeck". Bendel had laughed. But a young woman who arrived with a swarthy little escort began a furious flirtation with Hyacinth. He had replied in kindred spirit. It became thick and fast, the woman ending by abusing him amorously and slamming all the nearby plates upon the table. Then her fierce little escort became contorted with anguish and hatred. He arose, all his limbs convulsed and trembling, and made a lunge at their table. Bendel grappled with him; Hyacinth threw himself upon both as they rolled to the floor. A roar of voices, a mass of waving men and fists shut off the oxygen. The cymbaloon stopped and the proprietor tried to pry them apart. Then there was the run down the cold dark street to safety . . .

The tears nearly came to Hyacinth's eyes with the vision of plundered temples and altars defiled. In all these divagations there had been some mutilated

apparition of the goddess, some twisted shape of her had floated into the blaze. And yet in the morning the sun would return and stream in through his high window and dance vertical farandolas on his rug. The nodding sleeper would awake and look out of his window past the Heights, down into the valley where the dust arose in steep clouds, his state of mind so rarefied that he would shiver at the monstrous labyrinth below. Or, a fog would flow into the valley and lie rolling about at the edge of the escarpment, and something would beckon him to make crusade into that blanket of mist.

His face hardened into a mask of resolution as he said to his friend, „Let us go to Vadya tonight!"

How wildly the heart beats with sweet anticipations. How troubled are the spirits of those who go toward their goddesses with libations. His heart was a burnt offering. He was tossing the bleeding flaming thing in the air and catching it as he went, and a rending pain was in his breast.

2

The tortured silhouettes of mannikins make a mournful dance for the brain. These dark ugly little men had shut up their bazaars in which they sold silks rugs and sour milk, and were come to make holiday. Seen from the balcony they were a swarm of ants, with not a fair head amongst them. Their squat large-bellied wives and their bow-legged children all came and embraced the invitation to the dance, this executed at the top of the voice, with dry hopping jerks for the syncopated American airs. But the efforts of the five brass-men were ear-splitting for the little hall. Hyacinth and Robert-Martin drank beers without end in the grotto below the hall with a sombre group of friends. When they sallied upstairs Vadya had arrived, and her arrival had made a deep furrow. Hyacinth placed a green and yellow clown-cap of tin-foil upon his head and shimmied through the knot of men, bowing profoundly as he reached her. Vadya drew herself

together, her heels clicking in her somewhat military manner, and returned his bow with a gratuitous profusion of smiles to boot.

„So you have come here?" she exclaimed. „How do you like it? See, these are my people. Aren't they happy and noisy and excited?"

Vadya spoke this in her animated way, the generous expressions quick on her mobile face. She wore a dark navy dress of velour which in fitting her almost too tightly cried out the excellencies of her ripe forms, while displaying to advantage enough of her neck, arms and bosom *nacrè*. In approaching her from the rear the sight of her naked nape, which he had never seen before precipitated him into a posture of agonized immobility. You are beautiful, he thought, and I would not take ten-thousand Swedish noses for your scimitar shaped-one, nor a principality for your irregular mouth which offers an oblique smile. He looked at her deliberately. How remarkably fair her skin was. Her body was a young ripe fruit. His deliberate, too deliberate gaze she returned with a perfectly worldy-wise glance, for all her simplicity which was exemplified by the absence of ornament in her gown.

„I have never enjoyed anything so much in my life," he responded as mechanically as from a coma. „I have never seen so much color and movement. They are all just as happy and vivacious as you are . . . But may I dance this with you? I have so much to tell you."

„No, not the next two dances. I am sorry. But the third one. And I am so glad you like it."

The knot of men enclosed her again with its dark heads and its buzzing Armenian. Robert-Martin took his arm and whispered: „You must be careful. Her lover is here now. He is the famous portrait painter. Very jealous, although it is rumored that he is soon to marry a wealthy actress."

Hyacinth brooded and glared by the wall for two dances. There was a soft thundering in his head at the conclusion of the second, as Vadya made for him.

„The next is a waltz," she breathed. „And you waltz so well. I'm just delighted. But let us sit down. I am tired, too."

He took her arm, and, leading her to a seat, was conscious of her extraordinary softness. My little lump of happiness, he confided inwardly. The effect of her extremely dark Oriental eyes, her black hair against the impeccable white skin was tempestuous. As vicious as a parched sunlit day, when, in a garden only occasional clouds throw shadow over the beds of peonies, chrysanthemums, carnations. His was a pathological state during the dance with her, although he talked simply and swiftly.

„I am charmed by your dress, it is simple and yet exquisite. You are, consequently, much more beautiful tonight than when I saw you last week, for instance. I could kiss you right here before everybody."

„But you mustn't say such things", her expostulation with an evasive look which swept about the place and hovered about the successful painter who gave her sizeable cheques every week. And yet she was not repelling him, while accepting advances in an untrammelled manner.

The hours ran on, and the hall became littered with bits of paper, tin foil and cigar butts. Hyacinth's nerves exercised less and less command over his limbs as the blaring of the five brassmen continued in full career. His face carried a high flush, his eyes the smouldering of a fire that has been badly extinguished. The rest of the ball was, for him, a mere mounting of stairs to the balcony, whence he could consider panorama-wise the whole system of thunder and fury below. There, came the rack of remorse, and he would hurry to the grotto below where refreshments were served, roving thus up and down the passages and stairs like a circus lion. In the primitive tempo of a foxtrot he found renewed organization and sailed with Vadya clinging tightly to him through its complete cycle in faultless style. But the sapping effort for this and the clogged hours of awaiting the end left him thoroughly bedraggled. He thought of his home, for the moment, of his clean fresh room, of the luxury of a hot shower. He thought of goddesses and defiled altars, and the poet's plea for misericordium: „But it was thou I sought! Thou whom I thought to have found there!"

But when Vadya came to him in mock tears crying: „No one has asked to take me home," he shook himself together and declared:

„No one else had dared to, and you knew that I would never have permitted anyone else to take you home."

„How dare you! I have a mind not to accept your invitation at all, in that case."

How rich these moments are! She laughs and takes his arm with a quick sprightly motion, as the Orchestra sounds the last dance, an internationally known viennese waltz. He, feeling as if the music of his whole brooding youth is now swarming up to the ultimate crescendo, after which there are to be only brittle souvenirs.

Vadya is passive in his arms, and the elan with which he takes the waltz, in whirls to every beat, rather than three steps, is purely of artificial electricity. In jagged circles they spin toward the center of the floor, she, terrified against his perspiring chest, he, discovering in pure velocity the apotheosis of his unkempt passion. The laws of gravity groan at the stretch, and at length in some too glossy spot he reels and crashes backward to the boards, Vadya falling upon him slightly to the side. She topples off inertly by virtue of her tight dress, which could not save itself as the seams burst at the hip, and the shoulder slips tear, so that her breasts tumble forth, quite perfectly moulded things, illogical in the utter debacle. The music falters for a moment, and then resumes, while Hyacinth arises and panickily throws his soiled coat over her. She is in tears, dress ruined, arms bruised and stained as they hurry from the hall. The lights seem to have been shut off, the shouts and laughter of people have become as the roar of sea waves in Hyacinth's brain. Unrestrained sobs answer his inarticulate pleas for clemency in the taxi. Then she suddenly laughs, out of the mere joy of remarkable exhibitionism, and assumes an unhealthy gaiety, before which he bows his head.

„It was not your fault, poor boy!" she cries.

„You can never know what this meams to me!"

At her door he thought rapidly of means for resuming the offensive. Instead of being put to flight by the essentially unimportant mishap of the ball, he should

represent it as a display of naked violence, a reversion to atavism on his part. He should take her firmly by the shoulders of such a plumpness and say:

„Vadya, my ape woman. The barriers between us were destroyed by the intimacy of our common catastrophe."

Instead of which he gave her a cautious glance and began to plead.

„I am very lonely and unhappy, Vadya."

„Why are you unhappy?" with an indifferent gesture of her head. He was holding her hand, which she did not withdraw.

„You know", he muttered. „I need the soft feminine touch in my life. It is too bare, too serious, too full of books. If you could make me happy, wouldn't you?"

„But if it would make someone else unhappy", she returned. She understood him perfectly. Then she added brightly. „There are so many others who can make you happy."

„Happy." The word was so inclusive.

„Yes", he said in an absent manner, „May I kiss your hand?" She made no moan, but turned her head away, while he brushed it with his lips of violet. She was gone. Up the stairs.

He made off with a certain lightheaded elation, ascending the heights as the dawn broke. Yes, he reflected, she is so entirely wise. There are many others who can make happy. That is very true I suppose. But he was an altered man. Somewhere in the night's encounters his brain which had been like a sword unto him had been pounded into bluntness and softness.

Two anaemic suns appeared surreptitiously in the eastern haze. But, looking intently toward the horizon at the end of the valley, Hyacinth discovered that they were really one round slip of pink paper.

„You imbecile!" he shouted at the sun.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

INTERSTICE BETWEEN SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

Literary reviews in America classify into two types, personal and anthological. The *Little Review* belongs to the first, the *Broom* to the second.

It happens that the two women editors of the former possess the virtues of courage, non-compromise and plain speaking, plus some intelligence, sensitiveness, discontent and exploring zeal. Their magazine is undeniably a left wing organ and for the last seven years the real leader of our art reviews, by far the most provocative. On the other hand, the *Little Review* displays the personal weaknesses of its editors: an aggressiveness often resulting from insufficient education, a combative recognition of stupidities it is better to ignore than to waste energy upon, an insufficient respect for the value of literary traditions, general uncertainty as to just where they are sitting or where they are going next, a haphazard taste, a tendency to be imposed upon by a blindalley strangeness or an insignificant eccentricity. In consequence, the *Little Review* has been like a rudderless ship blown about in all directions by breezes from the left of Paris or London or Chicago. It has printed such antipathetic work as the poetry of William Butler Yeats and that of the raving Baroness, the perfections of Wallace Stevens and the inarticulate prosiness of Sherwood Anderson, the learned blasts of Ezra Pound and the high school exclamations of Robert MacAlmon. Lately, it has been seduced by Francis Picabia, whose jackass buffooneries were a certain incentive for *nettoyage* several years back, but who is now only a tedious humorist, long ago found out and left behind by the *avant-garde* of France. To the question as to just what the *Little Review* represents, the answer is, nothing but the wandering preferences of its editors.

The usual occupant of the editorial chair of a personal magazine is a mental gypsy, picturesque, enlivening — undisciplined, indiscriminating.

The *Broom* joined the anthology classification. Its doing so was the final disappointment which made

Secession inevitable. It accepted the principle of the general merchandise store. Have everything in stock, what one customer doesn't want, another will. It said: „*Broom* is a sort of clearing house" — in which artists of all nationalities, all schools, and all degrees of skill, be it added, are on exhibition. It decided to help the *Dial* in offering a diffuse assortment of culture to the American public, the useful but humble task of vulgarization. Incidentally, it has offered some pretty bad substitutes in Paul Claudel's idea of modernism by putting automobile goggles on Proteus, Shirley Seiffert's verbose and inept transposition to an industrial city of Illinois of the theme of Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, Haniel Long's Yellow Book „hangover", Masters' heavy-footed *Foxes*, Sherwood Anderson's very worst effort, Joseph Stella's baby talk on painting, Dr. Epstein's popular talks on modern poetry . . . It has done fairly well in presenting tightly written well constructed realistic short stories — *Hunger* by James Stephens, *The Helpless Ones* by Frederick Booth, *Candy Cigar and Stationary* by Waldo Frank, *Roman Night* by Paul Morand, *Black Jack Kerrigan* by Israel Solon — perhaps unwittingly since these afford a sufficient basis for a precise policy which would exclude the diluted fairy-tales of Donald Corley. A very severe catholicity can bring many kinds of excellence into a harmonious anthology. The cacaphony of the *Broom* reminds us of the rarity of that quality.

There is a third kind of magazine, the group magazine. This class is represented in America chiefly by liberal-political journals and by radical-economic reviews. The *New Republic*, for example, stands for a considerable body of American thought. It can even be located within a generation, let us say the thirty-five to forty year old progressives. This section of American thinking, this generation, its group of editors interpret very capably. It has unity, harmony, and stability. From the point of view of literature, the defect of these journals is that, first, they pay but partial attention to writing, and, second, that they are primarily interested in the social, interpretative, philosophical and psychological significances of literature rather than in esthetic meanings.

Secession aims to be neither a personal nor an anthological magazine, but to be a group organ. It will make group-exclusions, found itself on a group-basis, point itself in a group-direction, and derive its stability and correctives from a group. True, it has as yet no detailed manifesto and no organized group behind it. Its writers are scattered all over the world and have no common headquarters or generally sanctioned plans. Yet if one examines the writings of Kenneth Burke, Malcolm Cowley, E. E. Cummings, Foster Damon, Mark Turbyfill, the first two numbers of *Secession,* it is clear, I think, that there is a sizable corps of young American writers working substantially in the same direction, battling with similar problems, and achieving results which can be assembled in a fairly homogeneous review. *Secession* exists unreservedly for these and their kin. It does not consider as the *Dial* does that it is only half its work to give them a corner. Nor does it say with the *Broom:* „Throughout the unknown, path-breaking artist will have, when his material merits it, at least an equal chance with the artist of acknowledged reputation". It says rather: an artist of acknowledged reputation has generally made his contribution. He will have far less chance with *Secession* than the unknown path-breaking artist.

In order to represent more fully this group of writers, the Directorate of *Secession* will be reorganized for the next issue.

G. B. M.

To the passion for intellectual conciliations which animates the *Literary Review* of the N. Y. Evening Post, *Secession* opposes two sentences from the Director's correspondence: „The significance of one's position may often be better demonstrated by what one denounces than by what one praises . . . When this review ceases to chop off woodenheads, it ceases to function."

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Guillaume Apollinaire

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